



A SANCTITY OF LIFE MEMORIAL STONE

Jill Grier

I remember the Sanctity of Life Sunday of 1997 well. I remember the heat in my face as I sat and listened to our pastor give his message about the value of every human life. I remember trying so hard not to cry; knowing if one tear escaped, I would not be able to stop the flood that was building up behind it – and if Kurt saw that I was crying, would he then start to cry? *That* would make me cry even harder. What would people think we were crying about...?

13 years and a handful of days ago, Kurt and I were sent off to a routine 20-week ultrasound. We were so excited about this; we were expecting our third child. What would this baby look like? Were we to have a girl or another wonderful boy?

The tech was cheerful and talkative in the beginning. She became noticeably interested in the brain and the spine of our third son. She spent an eternity looking all up and down the spine hesitating to answer our questions. With our hearts in our throats, she announced she needed to talk with the doctor and she left the room. When she came back, she had an entourage of medical minds – a perinatologist and a geneticist. They were all there to present a unified front when they explained that our ‘fetus’ would be born with the worst form of spina bifida and hydrocephalus. We were told that an amniocentesis needed to be performed *immediately* to rule out any other birth anomalies because at 19.5 weeks gestation, we were right at the edge of our window of opportunity for a ‘therapeutic termination’ of this pregnancy. (We lived in Phoenix, Arizona at this time.) It would take a week to get the results, and we were running against the legal clock. That is really how they worded it.

It is bad enough to be wounded by a devastating blow with the news that the child you are carrying is going to be born with a lifetime of challenges. But to have the doctors you are supposed to trust immediately pour salt on that wound by nonchalantly focusing on the logistics of his murder - that’s heartless.

Our minds were already swirling with fears and questions about what this child would do to our family. What would childhood be like for Kody and Dylan who were so young and still needed so much? Would Kurt and I ever have a normal home again? Would we ever be able to go out and leave our children with a babysitter? Would this child ever

leave the care of our home? “*What have I gotten us into?*” I mean, I’ve never fantasized about parenting a child with special needs – *especially* after already having children. It is hard enough parenting ‘normal’ children and feeling some sense of success and accomplishment. For a brief moment, I wished I had never gotten pregnant a third time.

In an appointment where we were expecting pure joy and delight, we left with broken hearts and minds tormented with fear of the unknown. But I knew one thing. I loved this baby going into the appointment, and I loved him still. This baby was our son and as frightening as this was, killing him was not an option for me.

God was going to have His opportunity to show Himself to us in a very real and tangible way. He *could* work a miracle here! How would we ever know His power if we cut Him off at the pass.

I don’t want to mislead you. These doctors did not wear black cloaks and carry sickles. They did not have red beady little eyes and gnashing teeth. They did not corner Kurt and I up against a wall and bully us about keeping our imperfect ‘fetus’. No, the evil of this is much more subtle. Abortion is presented as a benign antiseptic clinical solution to a problem pregnancy – much like having a suspicious mole removed. But, Nicholas wasn’t some pre-cancerous growth; he was our child!

We are so thankful God gave Nicholas to our family. We are blessed by all three of our children. Certainly, Nicholas has some health issues. We do things for our youngest son’s care that we never have to do with Kody or Dylan. He endured more in the first month of his life than most of us will go through in an entire lifetime. He skips through his day facing risk and multiple/ongoing tests and surgical procedures. Yet, he is the sweetest, happiest, most lively and engaging child you will ever met.

God has not chosen to heal our son from his birth defect. God tells us to trust Him and not lean on our own understanding. He will make our paths straight. We may not know how, BUT the God who spoke the world into being and keeps the planets from colliding and the sun from exploding is the same God who keeps our son breathing, smiling, walking, singing, and yes, even dancing each day. Through this, we *have* touched, seen, and tasted the mercy and compassion and greatness of our God. Nicholas is a child of amazing grace. God’s grace IS sufficient for us. We are humbled by God’s intervention. We are blessed. Our lives are rich.

Now you might be saying, “Nice story, SO WHAT?”

This is the ‘SO WHAT’ – It is only by the grace of God I *didn’t* abort our child. Truly, abortion seems like an easy way out of a really scary problem.

You see, I grew up in a fundamental, Bible-believing home. Both my parents were involved in the Navigator ministry, the Billy Graham Crusades, and my dad was an

instructor for Memorize the Word from Moody Bible Institute. I went to church all growing up and ‘prayed the prayer’ and got baptized at the tender age of 6 after ‘accepting Jesus into my heart’ at a Child Evangelism Fellowship Backyard Bible Club.

I’m your *worst* nightmare....

Frankly, I’ve financially supported Planned Parenthood. I’ve purchased premarital birth control there. I’ve funded the abortion of my closest childhood friend when we were in high school. I’ve had premarital sex and most certainly would have aborted had I gotten pregnant. I passionately argued for a ‘woman’s right to choose’.

It is an absolute ‘GOD-THING’ Nicholas is alive today!

Planned Parenthood reports that one in six women who have had an abortion profess to be born-again, evangelical Christians. Based on these numbers, a staggering 250,000 evangelical Christian woman aborted in the year 2000.

Eugenic abortions (the one I was faced with and even professing Christian practitioners are hesitant to oppose) are of great concern as we face the age of fetal tissue harvesting, human genome mapping, embryonic and fetal stem cell research, a crumbling health care system, infanticide (Princeton’s own Dr. Singer) and euthanasia (infamous Dr. Kavorkian).

The statistics show that between 80% - 91% of adverse prenatal diagnosis’ are terminated. That is at least 80% of an entire population – systematically being wiped off the face of this country where there are at least 13 so called ‘Christian’ churches within a two-mile diameter of my home. The socially accepted child sacrifice and genocide of undesirables in a country where one in three Americans consider themselves Evangelical*.

What can we do? What can we do to help those parents? Remember, they could be sitting next to you in the pew each and every Sunday. They *are* sitting next to you in the pew every Sunday. What can we do to help them through this positively frightening time and give them the comfort, strength, truth, and support consistent with our faith?

There is a wonderful grassroots movement called CHASK. CHRISTIAN HOMES AND SPECIAL KIDS. This is a nationwide network of families already parenting a child with special needs who are eager to mentor, support, and help a family in this crisis. Should the mother choose not to raise her child, there are families on a waiting list through CHASK who want to adopt and raise another baby with special needs.

[I have a copy of their trifold brochure.](#) (click on blue) CHASK needs people all over the country to reproduce quality color copies of this brochure and introduce it to OBGYN’s and Family Physicians so they will know about this extremely valuable resource for their patients who have been given an adverse fetal diagnosis. Each brochure will cost about \$2.00 at Kinko’s – if you have a color copier available to you, you might consider

running off a handful for someone else to pass out to the doctors and clinics in our community.

There is also an area-specific resource for parents who have been given an adverse prenatal diagnosis; or for parents who have delivered a surprise special needs baby. The *Heartland Hug* is a parent primer on navigating this road less traveled that is Truth-filled and practical. Currently, this resource is available specific to Phoenix, Arizona, Austin, San Antonio, and the Dallas/Ft.Worth metroplex of Texas. Wichita's own CHOICES PERINATAL HOSPICE has a copy. It has been mailed to parents in other states throughout the country. Portions of this book are on the ***Growing Through Affliction*** website in PDF form. The primer is free and it is here to glorify God and to help bring healing to human hurt.

Lastly, I would be negligent if I didn't say a little something about Post-Abortion captivity. Let's not fool ourselves and fail to recognize that there are precious women in this very church who have had abortions. Here is a handy resource from Rachel's Vineyard Ministries for anyone who knows of someone who may be dealing with post-abortion guilt. Remember, as evil and tragic as abortion *is*, some of the most sincere, loving, and intelligent people have been dooped by Satan and 1 out of 6 of them are professing sisters-in-Christ. Abortion is *not* the unpardonable sin; forgiveness and healing is available for those in Christ Jesus.

I thank you for allowing me to be a part of your Sanctity of Human Life Sunday.”

For Christ's Crown and Covenant & His Kingdom Advanced ~

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*(American Religious Identification Survey from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.
<http://www.cnn.com/2009/LIVING/wayoflife/03/09/us.religion.less.christian/>)

Address to East Valley Bible Church, Gilbert, AZ/Sanctity of Human Life Sunday 1/98; Hill Country Bible Church, Cedar Park, TX 1/2001-2002; Lakeland Baptist Church, Lewisville, TX/Sanctity of Life Sunday 1-25-04

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A friend of mine, Jill Grier, has put together a very helpful document for those of you who have received an adverse prenatal diagnosis. I've had two sonograms that left me with many insecurities - I didn't know where to go or what to do. I felt alone and helpless. I wish I would have had Jill's booklet when I was faced with those challenges. I promise you it will give you a sense of peace because it will give you some direction, action steps, and perspective. Please read Jill's letter below and click on the link for the adobe file of her booklet- you may print it and refer back to it for help along the way. ~Lynnette

www. <http://growingthroughaffliction.com/GTA-AdversePrenatalDiagnosis.html>

Adverse Prenatal Diagnosis?

A HEARTFELT WORD OR TWO...

No doubt, you have received this comfort and strategy packet from a considerate physician. Perhaps you have been given this packet from a caring relative or friend. In any case, I am thankful this information has made its way to you.

The journey to bring this special baby to term is difficult, sometimes heart-wrenching, and an often lonely road. We know the emotional, physical, and spiritual ups' and downs' associated with getting an adverse prenatal diagnosis. Every pregnancy is filled with hope and expectation for that perfectly healthy baby. When that reality is challenged, it can help to know the experiences, coping mechanisms, and victories of parents who have been there. That is what this packet is all about.

There are many different fears and scenario's swirling around in your mind at this time. Some are productive. Some are not. You may not see it now, but being forewarned about your baby's condition can be a tremendous benefit to you AND to your child. Although the remainder of your pregnancy will be tainted with the sadness of the loss of that "perfect" child, you now have within your power the ability to take control of your pregnancy, birthing, and neonatal experience. This prenatal diagnosis gives you a unique opportunity to examine, scrutinize, and carefully select every anticipated aspect of care for you and this special child. It may be difficult in this moment, but imagine the overwhelming task of parents who unsuspectingly deliver a special-needs baby. You will have the benefit of having qualified care-givers already in place and you will be able to "hit the ground running", so to speak. This is a gift. This packet was the dream of a mother who - upon getting a prenatal diagnosis of spina bifida and hydrocephalus in the 19th week of her third pregnancy - was pressured by the medical community, members of her nuclear and extended family, and some well-intentioned friends to terminate her pregnancy and to abort her child. When she refused, her physician simply gave her a yellow Post-It Note with two phone numbers scribbled on it by way of help before washing his hands of her care. I am that mother. The cry of my heart is for you to be encouraged and strengthened in your decision to persevere; the cry of my heart is for you to come to know God in a more powerful and intimate way, and to have your journey-path smoothed by what I and other families have discovered about caring for your sweet baby.

You are a brave, loving parent to stand against popular wisdom and defend life as you face this new world of the unknown within your home and family. We know the journey is hard. We also know the journey is beautiful.

May God hold you in the cup of His hand ~

Jill Grier

The Columbo Tactic

by Greg Koukl of Stand To Reason

You can direct conversations in a non-offensive way by using these three carefully selected questions:

To learn more about what the person believes, ask: What do you mean by that?

- It clarifies the claims the person is making.
- It elicits what the person thinks.
- It provides a good conversation starter.

To make them defend their own views ask: How did you come to that conclusion?

- It clarifies the reasons for the person's ideas.
- It tells how the person thinks.
- It makes him bear the "burden of proof" for his own claims.

To uncover a flaw, begin your question with: Can you clear this up for me?

- Use this when reasons don't properly support the person's claim.
- It challenges a weakness or contradiction in their view.
- It uncovers a flaw with a question rather than a statement, and encourages them to think through what they believe.

Also use the Columbo tactic to get out of the "hot seat."

- Shift from an argument to a fact-finding mode in the conversation.
- Take the pressure off by using the first two Columbo questions.
- Close with "Let me think about that" and then research the issue before continuing the conversation. Remember, there's no need for home runs each time you engage someone in conversation. You can be effective and respectful by learning more about the other person's views without being argumentative by asking a few simple questions.

Stand to Reason - Training Christian ambassadors in the areas of knowledge, wisdom, and character - www.str.org
